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JESSE LYNCH WILLIAMS



for

Martin Egan

with a merry Xmas

from Jim Lynch Williams



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## BY JESSE LYNCH WILLIAMS

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PRINCETON STORIES (1895).

THE ADVENTURES OF A FRESHMAN (1899).

THE STOLEN STORY, AND OTHER NEWS-  
PAPER STORIES (1899).

NEW YORK SKETCHES (1902).

THE DAY-DREAMER (1906). (Being a novel-  
ization of the four-act comedy, "The Stolen  
Story.")

THE GIRL AND THE GAME, AND OTHER  
COLLEGE STORIES (1908).

THE MARRIED LIFE OF THE FREDERIC  
CARROLLS (1910).

REMATING TIME (1916).

WHY MARRY? (1918). New edition of "And So  
They Were Married."

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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*By*

JESSE LYNCH WILLIAMS



NEW YORK

CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

1923



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*"And when at last they put his first-born in his strong arms and the little pink tendril-like fingers closed about his thumb a strange tenderness suffused the father's frame," etc.*

PHIL had read it in a book. But life did not come true to literature. When they put his first-born in his arms a strange nausea suffused this father's frame and he handed the warm little bundle back to his sister hastily, as if it were hot.

"Take it away," he whispered to Mary. "I might break it."

And he bolted out of the room, for the doctor said he could see Nell now. The only joy he felt was over a less vainglorious but more important matter than becoming a father. The beautiful brave mother was all right.

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This young man had not wanted to become a father; not in the least. He and Junior's mother had been happy together. Now they would have to be happy apart, if at all, for whole years at a time, until Junior was big enough to stand trips to the wilds of Alaska or Africa or wherever else mining engineers had to go. Nell had always gone along until this usurper spoiled their life together. So Junior was really doing a scandalous thing, coming between husband and wife. No wonder that Phil had not wanted him.

Well, Junior's mother wanted him anyway. She wanted him terrifically, more than anything in the world except Junior's father. And as her husband wanted her to have everything she desired, why, probably it was all right. There was not much else that she had lacked.

Junior did not seem to understand that

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he wasn't wanted by his father, and took to Phil from the first. "All babies do," said the jealous young aunt. "It's a great gift and it's wasted on a man." Mary was a maiden, but she had hopes.

"He's so big and so kind," said the contented mother. "Children, dogs, and old ladies always adore Phil."

With Junior it was clearly a case of love at first sight, and he did not act as if he were a victim of unrequited affection. For example, unlike a woman scorned, he had no fury for his father at all except when Phil left the room. Then he howled. His father could soothe him when even his mother failed, and Junior would settle down into Phil's arms with a sigh of voluptuous satisfaction, quite as if he belonged there; and, of course, he did. That was the dismaying part about it to his father, who scowled and looked bored.

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This made the young mother laugh; and that in turn made Junior laugh, too, and look down at her from the eminence of his father's arms, as if trying to wink and say: "Rather a joke on the old man."

"I suppose I've got to do this all my life," said Phil.

"All your life," said Nell, rubbing it in; "but after a while you'll like it."

She had great faith in her son's charm.

Junior was five years old when his father came back from the Alaska project. He could not remember having met this grown-up before, but he might have said: "I have heard so much about you." His mother had told him. For example, his father was the best and bravest man in the world. Also, according to the same reliable authority, he loved Junior and his mother enormously and equally. He was far away, getting bread and butter for

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them. A wonderful person, a great big man, six feet two inches "and well proportioned," and such an honorable gentleman that — well, that was the only reason he was not coming home with a huge fortune, she explained. But at any rate he was coming home at last, and would be awfully glad to see what a big boy Junior had become.

He was, but Phil had always been rather shy with strangers, and he did not pay so much attention to his namesake as Junior had been led to expect. You see, every one in this tyrant's kingdom worshipped him, and Junior assumed that his father would follow conventions. For every night before he went to sleep his father's name had invariably been mentioned first in the list of people and animals and playthings that loved him.

Junior, though quite small, was a great

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lover, and much given to kissing. On momentous occasions, such as the start for the picnic the day after his father's arrival, Junior manifested his excitement by hugging and kissing everybody in sight, including the dogs. It was his earliest form of self-expression. His father, as it happened, was absorbed in packing the tea basket and had never been accustomed to being kissed while packing in camp. Besides, Junior had been helping his mother prepare the luncheon. That is, he had taken a hand in the distribution of guava jelly, and there was just one hardship in the life of this immaculate mining engineer he could never endure — sticky fingers. But Junior had not yet learned that, and so, taking advantage of his father's kneeling posture, he tackled him around the neck and indulged in passionate osculation.

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“Call your child off,” said Phil to Nell. She laughed.

“Come, precious; don’t bore your father.”

Junior did not know what that new word “bore” meant, but he released his father and transferred his demonstration to his mother. She never seemed to get too much and did not object to sweet fingers.

“Mamma,” said Junior as they started off in the car, “I don’t believe that man in front likes me.”

“He adores you, darling; he’s your father.”

Well, it sounded reasonable, but he remembered the new word. That evening when they came home the dogs, not having been allowed to go on the picnic, thought it was their turn and jumped up on Phil with muddy paws. Junior took



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command of the situation and of the new word.

"Down, Rex!" he said to the sentimental setter. "Don't bore my father." And he pulled Rex away by the tail.

At bedtime, when the nurse came to bear him off, he raised his arms to Phil.

"Can I bore you now?"

Phil laughed and kissed him good night.

"Funny little cuss, isn't he?" said Phil.

"He's a very unusual child," said this very unusual mother.

"Unusually ugly, you mean."

But he couldn't get a rise out of Nell.

"Oh, you'll learn to appreciate him yet."

Shortly before Phil left for his next trip the paternal passion had its way with this reserved father, for once. Some little street boys, as they were technically classified by the nurse, had been ordered off the drive by Junior, who was playing out

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there alone. They did not like his aristocratic manner, and rolled him in the mud. They were pommelling him in spite of his protests, when Phil heard the outcry and, getting a glimpse of the unequal contest from the library window, gave forth a shout that made the intruders take to their heels, the infuriated father after them.

As he raced down the drive he saw the wide-eyed animal terror on his child's face and it aroused within him an animal emotion of another kind, one he had never felt before, though he had often seen it exhibited by wild beasts — usually the mothers. It was a lust to destroy those two little boys, to render them extinct. He might have done so too; but fortunately they had a good start, and by the time he caught up with them civilization caught up with him sufficiently to make him realize what century he was living in. So,

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with a few vigorous cuffs and an angry warning he hastened back to his bleating offspring, recognizing with astonishment and some alarm how near blind parental rage can bring a man to murder.

Junior was not so much damaged as his white clothes were, but his childish terror was pitiful. He rushed into his father's arms and clung, quivering. Phil held him close.

"There, there, it's all right now. I won't let anybody hurt you."

Without realizing it, this fastidious father was kissing an extremely dirty face again and again. Junior, still sobbing convulsively, clung closer.

"You'll always be on my side, won't you, father?"

"You bet I will!" said Phil. "You're my own darling little boy."

He had had no intention of saying

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things quite like that, and didn't know that he could; but it sounded all right to Junior. This moment was to be one of those vivid recollections that last through a lifetime.

With a final long-drawn sigh of complete and passionate comfort, the small boy looked up into the big man's face and smiled.

"You love me now, don't you, father?" he said.

"You bet I love you!"

The boy had got him at last. But perhaps Junior presumed upon this new privilege. The next morning he awoke with a bad dream about those street boys, and as soon as the nurse permitted he rushed in to be reassured by his big father. Phil was preoccupied with shaving and did not know about the bad dream. Junior tried to climb up Phil's legs.

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"That will do," said his father in imminent peril of cutting his chin; "get down. Get down, I tell you. Oh, Nell!" — she was in the next room — "make your child quit picking on me."

"Come to me, dearest. Mustn't bother father when he's shaving."

Junior wasn't piqued but he was puzzled.

"But I thought he loved me; he told me he loved me," he called out. "Didn't you tell me you loved me, father?"

Phil laughed to cover his embarrassment. He had not reckoned on Junior's giving him away to Nell, and knew that she was triumphing over him now, in silence.

"Your father never loves anybody before breakfast," said Junior's mother, smiling as she covered him with kisses.

Apparently fathers could never be like mothers.

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Nell knew it was a risk, but she wanted to be with Phil as much as he wanted to be with her — the old life together they both loved. So they decided that Junior was big enough now to stand the trip to Mongolia. It was a great mistake. Before they had crossed Russia all of them regretted it — except Junior. He was having a grand time. At present he was working his way back from the door of the railway compartment to the window again, and for the third time was stepping upon his father's feet. Phil had had a bad time with the custom officials, a bad time with the milk boxes, and a bad night's sleep. His temper broke under the strain.

"Oh, children are a damn nuisance," he growled.

"Come, dear, look at these funny houses out of the window," said Junior's mother. "Aren't they funny houses?"

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That night when she was putting him to sleep with the recital of those who loved him, Junior inquired, "Mamma, what is a damn nuisance?"

"A damn nuisance," said his mother, "is a perfect darling."

All the same he had learned that he must avoid stepping on his father's freshly polished boots. One more item added to the list. Mustn't touch him with sticky hands, mustn't play with his pipes, mustn't make a noise when he takes his nap on the train — so many things to remember, such a small head to keep them all in.

There was no more milk. There was very little proper food of any kind for Junior in the camp, although Phil sent a small-sized expedition away over the divide for the purpose. The boy became ill. Phil ordered a special train to bring a famous physician. He even neglected



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his work on the boy's account, something unprecedented for Phil. But this was no place for children. The boy would have to go home. That meant that his mother would too. . . . All the beautiful dream of being together spoiled.

"I'm going back to America because I'm a damn nuisance to my father," Junior announced to Phil's assistant.

Phil neglected his work again and went with them as far as the border. "But you do love him," said Nell; "you know you do. You'd give up your life for him."

"Naturally. All I object to is giving up my wife for him."

But Phil's last look was at the poor little sickly boy. He wondered if he would ever see him again. He did. But he never saw his wife again.

It was too late to do anything about it.

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His assistant, who had seen these married lovers together, marvelled at the way his silent chief went about the day's work until his responsibility to the syndicate was discharged. Then he marvelled more when just as the opportunity of a professional lifetime came to Phil he threw up his job and started for home.

He meant to stay there. He would get into the office end of the work and devote the rest of his life to Nell's boy. That was his job now. Previously he had left it to her — too much so. The brave girl! Never a whine in all the blessed years of their marriage. The child until now had seemed merely to belong to him, a luxury he did not particularly want. Now he belonged to the child, a necessity, and being needed made Phil want him. But the Great War postponed this plan.

So Junior continued to live with his de-

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voted Aunt Mary. She cherished his belief in Phil's perfection, but she could not understand why her busy brother never wrote to his adoring little son. But for that matter, Phil never wrote to his adoring little sister. He never wrote letters at all, except on business. He sent telegrams and cables — long, expensive ones.

On the memorable day when father and son were reunited at last an unwelcome shyness came upon them and fastened itself there like a bad habit. Neither knew how to break it. Each looked at the other wistfully with eyes that were veiled.

Junior was more proud of his wonderful father now than ever. Phil had a scar on his chin. The boy was keen to hear all about it. His father did not seem inclined to talk of that, and Junior had a precocious fear of boring him. He had made up his mind never to be a damn nuisance

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to his father again. He had long since discovered the meaning of those words.

Phil soon became restless and discontented with office work. He had done the other thing too long and too well to enjoy civilization for more than a month or so at a time, and the financial crowd infuriated him. He was interested in mining problems. They were interested in mining profits.

Owing to changes wrought by the war another great opportunity had arisen in a part of the world Phil knew better than any other member of his profession. "It's a man's job," they told him, "and you're the only one who could swing it."

Phil shook his head. "Not fair to the boy."

"But with the contract we're prepared to offer you, why, your boy will be on Easy Street all his life."

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That got him. "Just once more," thought Phil. "I'll clean up on this and then retire to the country — make a real home for him — dogs and horses. I'll teach him to shoot and fish. That ought to bring us together."

So Junior's father was arranging to go away again. He told the boy about the plan for the future. "And we'll spend a lot of time in the woods together," said Phil. "I'll make a good camper of you. Your mother was a good camper." This comforted the silent little fellow and he did not let the tears come until after Phil's back was turned.

Meanwhile Phil had been going into the school question with the same thoroughness he devoted to every other job he undertook.

And now the epochal time had come for Junior to go away to boarding school.

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He was rather young for it, but Aunt Mary, it seems, was going to be married at last.

She volunteered to accompany the boy on the journey and see him through the first day. His father was very busy, of course, with preparations for his much longer and more important journey. Junior had always been fond of Aunt Mary, had transferred to her a little of the passionate devotion that had belonged to his mother. Only a little. The rest was all for his father, though Phil did not know it, and sometimes watched these two together with hungry eyes, wondering how they laughed and loved so comfortably.

On the evening before the great day his father said: "I know several of the masters up there." A little later he added: "One of the housemasters was a classmate of mine at college." Then he said: "I've

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been thinking it over. Maybe I better go up there with you myself."

"Oh, if you only would!" thought the little fellow. But he considered himself a big fellow now and had learned to repress such impulses, just as he and the dogs had learned not to jump up and kiss Phil's face. So all Junior said was: "That's awfully kind of you, but can you spare the time?" He always became self-conscious in his father's presence.

"You'd rather have your Aunt Mary? Well, of course, that's all right."

"No, but" — Junior dropped his eyes and raised them again — "sure I won't be a nuisance to you?"

Phil had forgotten the association of that word. All he saw was that the boy wanted him more than he did Mary and it pleased him tremendously. "Then that's all fixed," he said.



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The housemaster was of the hearty, pseudo-slangy sort. He said to Junior's father: "Skinny little cuss, isn't he. Well, we'll soon build him up."

"Aleck, I want you to take good care of this fellow," said Phil. "He's all I've got, you know."

"Oh, I'll keep a strict eye on him, and if he gets fresh I'll bat him over the head."

Junior knew that he was supposed to smile at this and did so. He did not feel much like smiling. He discovered that he was to be in the housemaster's house. He did not believe that he would ever like this Mr. Fielding, but he did in time.

As it came nearer and nearer his father's train time the terrible sinking feeling became worse, and he was afraid that he might cry after all; and that would disgrace his father. They walked down to the station together. They walked slowly. They would not see each other

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again for a year — maybe two. Both were thinking about it, neither referring to it. “I suppose that’s the golf links over there?” said Junior.

“I suppose so,” said Phil. He hadn’t looked.

There were a number of fathers and a greater number of mothers saying good-by. Some of the mothers were crying, all of them were kissing their boys. Even some of the fathers did that. Junior and Phil saw it. They glanced at each other and then away again, both wondering whether it would be done by them; each hoping so, yet fearing it wouldn’t be. Phil remembered how when he was a youngster he hated to be kissed before the other boys. He did not want to mortify the manly little fellow; and the boy knew better than to begin such things. (“Don’t bore your father.”)

“Well,” said Phil, looking at his watch,

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"I suppose I might as well get on the train." Then he laughed as though that were funny. "Good-by," he said. "Work hard and you'll have a good time here. Good-by, Junior." The father held out his hand.

The son shook it. "Good-by, father. I'll bet you have a great trip in the mountains." And Junior laughed too. The train pulled out, and the forlorn little boy was alone now. Worse. Surrounded by strangers.

"Well, I didn't mortify him, anyway," said the father.

"Well, I didn't cry before him, anyway," said the son. But he was doing it now.

The veil between them was not yet lifted.

Junior had a roommate named Black. So he was called Blackie. Blackie had a

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nice mother, who used to come to see him frequently. Junior took considerable interest in mothers, observed them closely when even the most observant of them were quite unaware of it. He approved of his roommate's mother, despite her telling Blackie not to forget his rubbers, dear. Blackie glanced at Junior to see if he was listening. Junior pretended that he wasn't.

"Aren't mothers queer?" said Blackie after she had gone.

"Sure," said Junior.

"Always worrying about you. You know how it is."

"Sure."

"I bet your mother's the same way."

Junior hesitated. "My mother's dead," he said. "Bet I can beat you to the gate." They raced and Junior beat him.

But he soon perceived that he would

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never make an athlete, and so he was a nonentity all through the early part of his school career, one of the little fellows in the lower form, thin legs and squeaky voice.

The things on the walls of Junior's room — spears, arrows, shields, and an antelope head — first drew attention to Junior's only distinction. That was why he had put them there.

“Oh, that's nothing,” he said with some arrogance, after the expected admiration and curiosity had been elicited. “You just ought to see my father's collection.” And this gave Junior his chance to tell about the collector. “These things — only some junk he didn't want and sent to me.”

This was not strictly true. His father had not sent them. Junior had begged them from his aunt, and she was glad to

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get them out of her new house. They did not go in any of her rooms. It was soon spread about the school, as Junior knew it would be, that this skinny little fellow in the lower form had a father who was worth while, a dare-devil who led expeditions to distant and dangerous lands and seldom lived at home. He had killed his man, it seems, had nearly lost his life from an attack by a hostile tribe in Africa. He became a romantic, somewhat mythical figure.

"When my old man was in college," said Smithy, also a lower-form boy and envious of Junior's vicarious fame, "he made the football team."

"My father was the captain of his eleven," said Junior.

"My father was in the war," said Smithy.

"Mine was wounded."

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But he soon observed that one could not boast too openly about one's father. Smithy made that mistake about the family possessions — yachts and the like. He was squelched by an upper-form boy. Junior became subtle. He caused questions to be asked and answered them reluctantly, it seemed.

Many of the boys had photographs of fathers in khaki. Junior went them one better. After the Christmas holidays the crowded mantelpiece included an old faded kodak of Phil in a tropical explorer's costume — white helmet, rifle, binoculars, cartridge belt. It had been taken as a joke by one of his engineer associates in Africa but it was taken seriously by Junior and his associates in school.

"Where is the scar from the African spear-thrust?" asked Smithy.

"It doesn't show in the picture," said



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Junior, "but he often lets me see it. He and I always go fishing together in the North Woods when he's in this country. Long canoe trips. I enjoy camping with him because he's had a pretty good deal of experience at that sort of thing."

Junior established a very interesting personality for Phil.

"Gee! I wish my father was like that," said one of the boys. "My old man always gives me hell."

One day during the second year Blackie said, "June, why doesn't your father ever come here to see you?"

"Oh, he's so seldom in this country, and he's terribly busy when he gets here. Barely has time to jump from one large undertaking to another." He had heard Aunt Mary's husband say "large undertaking."

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"Well, some of the fellows think you're just bluffing about your father."

"Huh! They're jealous. Look at Smithy's father. Nothing but money and fat. Huh!"

Then came the great day when a wireless arrived for Junior. Very few boys get messages from their fathers by wireless. "Land Friday," it said. "Coming to see you Saturday." Ah! That would show them!

Junior jumped into a sort of first-page prominence in the news of the day. He let some of his friends see the wireless. And now all of them would see his father on Saturday. That was the day of the game. Junior would have a chance to exhibit him before the whole school. "Six feet two and well proportioned." "Captain of his team in college." He planned it all out carefully. They would

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arrive late at the game and Junior would lead him down the line. But he would do it with a matter-of-fact manner as if used to going to games with his father.

On Friday he received a telegram. "Sorry can't make it stop am wiring head-master permission spend week-end with me stop meet at office lunch time stop go to ball game and theater in the evening." It was a straight telegram at that, not a night letter. That would show the boys what kind of father he had.

"Hot dog!" they said. "But look here! You'll miss the game."

"The game" meant the great school game, of course, not the mere world-series event Junior was going to.

"Well, you see, he doesn't have many chances to be with me. I'll have to go." A dutiful son.

But on Saturday morning he received

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another telegram. "Sorry must postpone our spree together letter follows."

He was beginning to wonder if his father really wanted to see him. It was a great jolt to his pride. He had counted upon letting the boys know where they lunched, what play they saw together, and perhaps there might be a few hair-breadth escapes to relate.

"He can't come," said Junior to his roommate, tearing up the telegram.

"Why can't he?" asked Blackie. Did Blackie suspect anything? His parents never let anything prevent their seeing Blackie.

"Invited to the White House," said Junior, tossing the torn telegram into the fire. "The President wants to consult him about conditions in Siberia."

"Gee!" This made a sensation and it

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would spread. "But aren't you going to see him at all?"

"Of course. Going down next week probably, but you know an invitation to the White House is a command."

"That's so." Junior's father's stock was soaring.

That evening Smithy dropped in. He had heard about the White House and the President.

"Huh! I don't believe you've got a father," said Smithy.

Junior only smiled and glanced at his roommate. Later Blackie told the others that Smithy was jealous. "His father has nothing but money and fat." Junior was always too much for Smithy. But suppose the promised letter did not follow. It hardly seemed possible. He had received occasional cables, several telegrams and that one notable wireless, but

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never in all his life a letter from his father.

It came promptly. It was brief and it was dictated, but it was a letter all the same, and he was much impressed. He had a letter from his father, like other fellows. It explained that the writer had been called away to New Mexico by important business, but that he hoped to join his son during the summer. "It's time we got acquainted. With much love, Your Father."

"Well, we're going to meet during the summer anyway," thought Junior, folding up the letter. And his father had sent his love. To be sure, he sent it through his secretary. But he sent it all the same.

That evening Junior arranged to be found casually reading a letter when the gang dropped in.

"What have you got?" asked Smithy.

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"Oh, just a letter from my father," remarked Junior casually. "Wants to know if I won't go out to the Canadian Rockies with him next summer." He seemed to keep on reading. It was a bulky letter apparently. Junior had attached three blank sheets of paper of the same size as that on which the note was written.

"Gee! Your old man writes you long ones," said Smithy. "What's it all about?"

"Oh, he merely wanted to tell me about his conference with the President."

"Hot dog! Read it aloud."

"Sorry, Smithy, but it's confidential." Folded in such a way that its brevity was concealed, Junior carelessly exposed the first sheet bearing his father's engraved letterhead. "Confidential" had been written by pen across the top. Junior had written it.



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All this produced the calculated effect for his father, but it was cold comfort for the son.

Well, he did see his father at last, but it was during the summer vacation, and the boys would know nothing about it until the fall term opened. Junior was staying with Aunt Mary in the country, and came in for the day. Phil was dictating letters and jumped up with a loud "Hello, there, hello!" And this time he kissed his son, right in front of his secretary. She was the only one of the three not startled. Phil and Junior both blushed.

"Mrs. Allison, this is Junior," said Phil. He seemed to be really glad to see the boy, and Junior's heart was thumping. Mrs. Allison said "Pleased to meet you," but Junior liked her all the same. She looked kind. And while her employer finished his dictation she

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glanced at Junior and smiled. The letter progressed slowly and had to be changed twice. Mrs. Allison knew why, and smiled again, at her pencil this time. She understood them both better than they understood each other.

"Thank you, Mrs. Allison," Phil said; "that will be all today. I'm too tired." She knew he never tired. "I'll sign them after lunch and mail them myself." Then he turned to Junior. "Now you and I are going out to have a grand old time together, eh what, old top?"

He slapped Junior on the back. Then Mrs. Allison left the room, and father and son were alone together. It frightened them.

Already the old clamping habit of reserve was trying to have its way with them, though each was determined to prevent it. Both of them laughed and

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said "Well, well!" hoping to bluff it off.

"First, let's have a look at you," said Phil; and he playfully dragged Junior toward the window. The boy's laughter suddenly died, and Phil now had a disquieting sense of making an ass of himself in his son's eyes. But that was not it. Junior dreaded the strong light of the window. With his changing voice had arrived a few not very conspicuous pimples; such little ones, but they distressed him enormously.

"Well, feel as if you could eat something?"

"Yes, thank you," said Junior. He feared it sounded cold and formal. He couldn't help it.

They went to a club on the top of a high office building. Junior's name was written in the guest book, which awed him agreeably. A large, luxurious luncheon

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was outlined by Phil, beginning with a cantaloupe and ending with ice cream — a double portion for Junior. This was first submitted to Junior for approval. He had forgotten his facial blemishes.

“Golly! You bet I approve,” said Junior laughing. That was more like it.

Phil summoned a waiter and then sent for the head waiter. A great man, his father, not afraid even of head waiters. And he ordered with the air of one who knew. No wonder the waiters seemed honored to serve him. Only, how was one to “get this over” to the boys without seeming to boast?

“A little fish, sir, before the cutlets?”

“Yes, if you’ll bring some not on the menu.” That was puzzling. Phil explained. Fish which had arrived at the club after the menu had been printed was sure to be fresh.

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“Oh, I see,” said Junior. This would make a hit with the boys.

There was no doubt about it, his handsome father was the most distinguished personage in the whole large roomful of important-looking people. Several of them gathered around to welcome Phil. Junior was presented. Their greetings to the son showed their warm affection, their high regard for the father. Junior wallowed in filial pride. If only Smithy could see him now! What a father! A citizen of the world who did big things and wore perfect-fitting clothes, cut by his Bond Street tailor in London—the finishing touch of greatness to a boy of Junior’s age — and he recalled what one of the engineers had said to Aunt Mary, “Even in camp he shaves every day.”

“Well, tell me how everything is going at school,” said the father, who did not

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dream that he was being hero-worshipped.

But Junior could not be easy and natural, as with Aunt Mary. He blushed as in the presence of a stranger. He heard his own raucous voice and hated it. He took unnecessary sips of water.

He felt better and bolder after the delicious food arrived. Phil looked on with amusement, amazement at the amount the youngster consumed.

"Next year I hope you can find time to come down to see us at school," Junior ventured with his double portion of ice cream. "All the fellows want to meet you."

"I want to meet them," said his father. "This fall on the way back, maybe."

"Oh, you're going away again?"

"Next week I'm going up into the woods with Billy Norton on a long canoe trip. Some new country I want to show

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him. Trout streams never yet fished by a white man."

"Gosh! That'll be great," said Junior.

"Some day I'll take you up there. It's time you learned that game. Fly casting, like swinging a golf club, should begin before your muscles are set. Would you care to go on a camping trip with me?"

Care to! Of course it was the very thing he was doing all the time in his day-dreams, but he could not say that to his father. He said "Yes, thanks," and paused for another sip of water. "You wouldn't — no, of course, you wouldn't want me to go along this time."

"Not this time. You see, I promised Billy. Some day though — you and I alone. Much better, don't you think?"

"Yes, sir."

"Don't call me sir! Makes me feel like a master. I'm your father." They



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laughed at that and went back to the office. "Only take me a second to sign these letters," said Phil. Junior looked at the neat pile of them, again impressed by his father's importance.

"That's awfully nice paper," he said, coveting the engraved letterhead with his father's name on it, which was also his name.

"If you like it, take some," said Phil as he rapidly signed that name. "Help yourself, all you want. Wait, I'll get you a whole box." He touched a bell and a boy came in. "Get a box of my stationery and ship it to this address." He turned to his letters again. "Then you won't have to pack it all the afternoon." Pack it? Oh, yes, out of doors men said "pack" instead of "carry." He would say it hereafter.

On the way from the elevator, as they

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passed through the arcade, Junior stopped to gaze with admiration at a camera in a shop window.

“Like one of those?” asked Phil. He led the way in. “Take your pick,” he said. And then, “Ship it to this address.”

It was the only way this shy father knew how to express his affection. It was not easy to say much to this boy. He seemed keen and critical under his quiet manner.

Before the baseball game was over — a dull, unimportant game — they were both talked out, each wondering what was the matter. “I suppose I bore him,” said Phil to himself, and soon began thinking about his business. When their grand old time together was finished each felt a horrible sense of relief, though neither would acknowledge it to himself.

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"Poor little cuss!" thought Phil. "I'd like to be a good father to him, but I don't know how."

And the boy: "I'm afraid he's disappointed in me. I'm so skinny and have pimples." If he were only a big, good-looking fellow like Smithy, who played on the football team, his father would be proud of him. Smithy's parents saw him almost every week in term time and took him abroad every summer. They were having his portrait painted.

"What kind of a time did you have with your father in town?" asked his Aunt Mary. Junior felt rather in the way at times, now that she had a husband.

"Bully! Great!" and he made an attractive picture of it. "Father and I are so congenial, now that I'm old. Next summer we're going to the woods together."

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"How do you talk to your kids?" Phil asked Bill Norton by the camp fire.

"I don't talk to them. They aren't interested in me except as a source of supply. New generation!"

"I'm crazy about my boy," said Phil, "but I have an idea that he considers the old man a well-meaning ass. Funny thing; that little fellow is the only person in the world I'm afraid of."

"No father really knows his own son," said Billy. "Some of them think they do, but they don't. It's a psychological impossibility."

Back at school again. A quick, scudding year. Summer vacation approaching already!

"We'd be so pleased if you would spend the month of August with us in Maine," wrote Blackie's mother. She had grown

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fond of the boy and was sorry for him. Motherless — fatherless, too, for practical, for parental purposes.

Junior, with his preternatural quickness, knew she was sorry for him and appreciated her kindness, but he was not to be pitied and his father was not to be criticized. "That's awfully good of you," he replied, "but father is counting upon my going up to the North Woods with him on a long canoe trip. Some new country where no other white man has ever been."

He went to the woods, but not with his father. It was the school camp — not the wild country his father penetrated; but there was trout fishing all the same, and he loved it. Like many boys who are not proficient at athletics, he took to camp life like a savage and developed more expertness at casting and cooking and canoeing than did certain stars of the

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football field or track. He had natural savvy. The guides said so. Besides, he had an incentive to excel. He was not going to be a nuisance to his father on the trip they would take together some day. And though he reverted to a state of savagery in the woods, he kept his tent and his outfit scrupulously neat and won first prize in this department by a vote of the counselors. For excellent reasons he did not shave every day in camp, but he would some day.

He learned a great deal about the ways of birds while he was in the woods, and back at school he persuaded Blackie to help organize The Naturalists Club, despite the jeers of the athlete idolaters. He took many bird pictures with the camera and he prepared a bird census of the township. This was published in the school magazine, and so Junior decided

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that when he got through college he would be a writer.

He had not seen his father for two years. South America this time — in the Andes. The canoe trip was no longer mentioned. Junior went to the school camp regularly now. He was acknowledged the best all-round camper in school. He won first prize in fly casting and the second in canoeing. He was getting big and strong, and became a good swimmer.

He spent his Christmas vacation with Aunt Mary, and while there Mrs. Fielding, the wife of the housemaster, in town for the holidays, dropped in for tea one day with Aunt Mary. They did not know that Junior was in the adjoining room, reading Stewart Edward White.

“But it’s criminal the way Phil neglects that darling boy,” said Aunt Mary.

“And he’s developing in such a fine



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way too," said Mrs. Fielding. "He's one of the best liked boys in school."

"I can't understand my brother. Of course he's terribly engrossed with his career, now that he has won success, but he might at least send a picture post card occasionally."

"You mean to say he never writes to his own son!" Mrs. Fielding was shocked and indignant. And then came this tragic revelation to Junior:

"Well, you see," said Aunt Mary, "Phil never wanted children, and he's not really interested in the boy."

"You don't tell me so! Why, Aleck always speaks of your brother as if he were so generous and warm-hearted."

"Yes, that's what makes it so pathetic. He is kind and tries to make up for his lack of affection by giving Junior a larger allowance than is good for him. But he

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never takes the trouble to send him a Christmas present."

So that explained it all. "He's not interested in me. I wasn't wanted." And after that he had his first experience with a sleepless night.

A few days later Junior remarked, "By the way, Aunt Mary, did I show you the binoculars father sent me for Christmas?" He handed them to her for inspection. They looked secondhand. They were. He had picked them up that morning in a pawnshop. "These are the very ones that father carried all through the war. He knew I'd like them better than new ones. Just like father to think of that. You remember his showing them to us when he got back?"

Aunt Mary did not remember such things — he knew she wouldn't — but she rejoiced to hear it.

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"He has sent me a typewriter too; only he ordered it shipped directly to school."

"That was nice of him, wasn't it?" said Aunt Mary.

"That's the way he does with most of the presents he sends me. You remember the camera?"

She did remember the camera.

The typewriter had been ordered on the installment plan. Junior hadn't saved enough money from his allowance to buy it outright.

"He's not going to get me a radio set until he finds out which is the best make on the market, he says."

"Oh, has he written to you?" Aunt Mary was still more surprised.

"Every week," said Junior.

"Oh, Junior! I'm so glad. But why haven't you ever told me, dear?"

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Junior smiled. "I didn't want to make you jealous. He never writes to you."

"But didn't you know how I would want to hear all his news?"

"You are so terribly engrossed in Uncle Robert's career, I thought maybe you weren't interested in father."

At school the binoculars made a hit with the boys because they showed the scars of war, but no one thought much of typewriters as Christmas presents except Junior. He knew what he was doing.

A few days later, when Blackie entered the room he found his roommate engrossed in reading a letter and so said nothing until Junior emitted an absent-minded chuckle.

"What's the joke?"

"Oh, nothing; just a letter from my father."

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"From your father? I thought he never wrote to you."

"What do you know about it?"

"Well, I never see any envelopes with foreign stamps."

"He always incloses mine in letters to my aunt."

"But you never mentioned them, all the same," said Blackie, "except the one about the White House."

"They are confidential, mostly." Junior returned to the absorbing letter. Presently he laughed outright.

"What does he say that's so funny?"

"Oh, hell! Read it yourself." Junior seemed irritated and tossed the bulky letter across to his roommate.

It had taken the boy some time to compose this letter to himself, for it required more than the possession of a typewriter and his father's engraved sta-

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tionery to create a convincing illusion of a letter from a father. Junior had seen so few, except for those Blackie had allowed him to read, that he had no working model for long, interesting letters worthy of a great man like his father.

The first draft had begun "My darling boy," but he changed that — it sounded too much like Blackie's mother. He made it "My dearest son." He rather fancied that, but finally played safe and addressed himself simply as "Dear Junior."

My work here is going fine. I have three thousand natives at work under me not to speak of a hundred engineers on my staff doing the technical work. I am terribly busy but of course won't let that interfere with my regular weekly letter to you.

Junior was watching Blackie's face.

I often think of the last canoe trip with you in Canada and can hardly wait until I take another

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canoe trip with you in Canada. Rember that time you hooked a four-pounder with your three ounce rod? You were a little fellow then, that was before you went away to school. Rember how you yelled to me for help to land same?

Business men always said "same," but Junior didn't like it, and besides, his father was a professional man, so he changed "same" to "him."

Of course it wasn't much of a trick for me to land that four pound trout on a three ounce rod, because I am probly the best fisherman in any of the dozen or more fishing clubs I belong to.

Junior revised that to read:

Because I happen to have quite a little experience landing trout and salmon in some of the most important streams in the world, from the high Sierras to the Ural Mountains.

It would never do to make his father guilty of blowing — the unforgivable sin.

He thought that was all right for a beginning, but did not know how to follow

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it up. He wanted to put in something about the Andes, with a few stories of wild adventure and hairbreadth escapes, but although he read up on the Andes in the encyclopedia, as he did on all his father's temporary habitats, he did not feel that the encyclopedia's style suited his father's vivid personality. In an old copy of the National Geographic Magazine he found a traveler's description of adventures in that part of the world, and simply copied a page or two. It had to do with an amusing though extremely dangerous adventure with a python, which had treed one of the writer's gun bearers — a narrow escape told as a joke — quite his father's sort of thing; and no one would ever accuse Junior of inventing such a well-written narrative with such circumstantial local color.

Blackie was properly impressed by the



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three thousand natives and one hundred experts, and he, too, laughed aloud at the antics of the gun bearer. He told the other boys about it, as Junior meant him to do, and some of them wanted to read it too. They dropped in after study hour.

Junior, it seems, required urging, like an amateur vocalist who nevertheless has brought her music.

"Oh, shoot!" he said. "It doesn't amount to anything. Just a letter from my father."

"Why don't you read it aloud?" suggested Blackie.

Junior seemed bored, but soon submitted. Like vocalists, he was afraid that they might stop urging him.

"Oh, very well," he said. He skimmed lightly over the opening personal paragraph with the parenthetical voice people use when leading up to the important

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part of a letter, though this was a very important part for Junior, to get it over. Then, with the manner of saying "Ah, here we are," he began reading in a louder and more deliberate tone, but not without realistic hesitation here and there, as if unfamiliar with the text. He read not only the amusing adventure with the python, but an authoritative paragraph on the mineral deposits of the mountains. So his audience never doubted that he had a real letter from a real mining expert who signed himself "Your affectionate friend and father."

Junior carelessly tossed the letter upon the table. "Some day I'll read you one of his interesting ones," he said.

"Do it now," said one of his admirers. "It's great stuff."

"No, I never keep letters," said Junior and, to prove it, tore up the carefully pre-

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pared document and tossed it in the fire.

“I’ll let you know when I get a good one.”

This was so successful that he did it again. There were plenty of other quotable pages in the same magazine article, and Junior had a whole box of his father’s stationery. But at the beginning and end of each letter Junior always insinuated a few paternal touches, suggesting a rich past of intimacy and affection, though just to make it a little more convincing he would occasionally insert something like this, “But I must tell you frankly, as man to man, that you spent entirely too much money last term,” and interrupted his reading to say, “Gee! I didn’t mean to read you fellows that part.” And they all laughed. A touch of parental nature that made all the boys akin.

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The fame of these letters spread from the boys' end of the dinner table to the master's. Mrs. Fielding said to Junior one day, "I'm so glad your father has been writing to you lately."

"Lately? Why, he always writes to me. But don't tell my Aunt Mary. Might make her jealous."

Junior smiled as if he had a great joke on his Aunt Mary. There, he got that over too! Neither of these ladies would dare criticize his father again.

"Is your Aunt Mary so fond of him as all that?"

"Why, of course!"

"Well, I'm glad you're hearing from him, anyway. I so seldom see letters addressed to you on the hall table."

"I have a lock box at the post office."

"Oh," said Mrs. Fielding.

So that explained it all. It was true

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about the lock box. Junior exhibited the key while he was speaking, and he was seen at the post office frequently to make the matter more plausible. He even opened the box if anyone was around to watch him, though he never found any letters there except those he put in and pulled out again by sleight of hand, whistling carelessly as he did so.

Mr. Fielding had asked Junior to step into the office a moment. "What do you hear from your father?" he said.

"Oh, he's quite well, thank you, sir. He'll be starting for home soon. He says he's not going to let anything interfere with our canoe trip this year. It's the funniest thing how something has always happened every summer to prevent it. Father says we're going to break the hoo-doo this time."

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"I see," said Mr. Fielding.

Junior had heard Mr. Fielding say "I see" before, and he had been in school too long now to undervalue its significance. He would have to be on guard. He knew he had told conflicting stories.

"Do you hear from him regularly?"

"Oh, no; the mails are so irregular from that part of the world."

"How often?"

"Well," said Junior, with his engaging smile, "not so often as I'd like, of course. But then he's a very busy man."

"That story about the python — it sounded like a corker as Blackie told it secondhand. Mind letting me read that letter?"

"Sorry, sir. I destroyed it." Blackie would vouch for that, if necessary.

"I see." The housemaster looked at Junior in silence, then he said with a not

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unkind smile, "Junior, I'm very fond of your father. He's one of the finest fellows that ever lived."

"Sure," said Junior.

"I've known him longer than you have. I don't think he ever did anything dishonorable in his life."

"Of course not."

What was coming? He must keep his head now.

"You know how your father would feel if I couldn't honestly say the same thing about you?"

"Why, what do you mean, Mr. Fielding?"

"Just tell me the truth, Junior, and it needn't ever go out of this room. Does your father ever write to you at all?"

"Why, sir, you don't think my father is the sort who wouldn't write to his own son, do you?" Then the boy added des-

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perately, "I don't see why you all want to make him out a piker."

"Did your father write the letter describing the fight with the python?"

"Look here, Mr. Fielding, you people don't understand. I'm better friends with my father than most boys. You see, my mother's dead and all that. So — well, don't you see, he sort of takes it out in writing me long letters. He thought that stuff about the python would amuse me."

He was a loyal little liar and the house-master admired him for it. But it wouldn't do. Mr. Fielding opened a drawer of his desk and took out an old magazine.

"Does your father take the National Geographic?"

Junior crumpled up.

"I don't know, sir." He was in for it



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now — caught. Mr. Fielding opened the magazine and pointed out a marked page to Junior.

“Junior, I know you won’t accuse an honorable gentleman like your father of stealing another man’s writings, passing them off as his own. There’s an ugly name for that. It’s called plagiarism.”

He had tried to defend his father, and look at the result!

“I wrote those letters, Mr. Fielding.”

“I knew that,” said Mr. Fielding gently. “You won’t do it again, though, will you, Junior?”

“Hardly.”

“That’s all. You may go now.”

Junior turned at the door. He knew that this was not all. He was being let down too easily.

“Mr. Fielding ——” he began, and hesitated. “It won’t be necessary for you to tell my father, will it?”

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"I won't tell him, but you will."

"No, sir, I could never do that."

"Well, we'll see. Good night, Junior."

So he could write no more letters to exhibit to the boys. He explained that his father had gone on a long expedition inland. No chance for mail for months. They made no comment, but the whole house knew that he had been summoned "to the office." They suspected something, but they would never discover the truth from him. He would bluff it out to the end.

But now, more than ever, he wanted letters from father, even if written by himself. He had formed the habit. They somehow did him good. They made him feel that his father was interested in him.

So, once in a while, just for his own eyes, when Blackie was not around he opened the typewriter and said all the things he wanted his father to say to him.

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As no one would ever see these letters, he could go as far as he liked. He went quite far. He even said things that only mothers said:

*My darling son* : Don't you care what he thinks about you; I understand and I forgive you. You meant it all right and I like you just the same, even if you are not an athlete and have got pimples. When I get back we'll go off to the West together and live down this disgrace. Your devoted father and friend.

Sometimes he laughed a little, or tried to, when he realized how these letters would bore his distinguished parent. But while writing them his father seemed not only fond of him but actually proud of him. A writer can invent anything:

I was so pleased to hear your poem about the meadow lark was accepted by the magazine. Your article about Birds in Our Woods was very interesting and very well written. I believe you will make a great writer some day, and think how

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proud I will be when you are a great writer, and people point to your picture in the newspapers! I'll say, "That's my son; I'm his father." Of course, I was disappointed that you did not become a great athlete like me, but intellectual distinction is good if you can't get athletic distinction, and it may be more useful for a career.

He got a good deal of comfort out of being a father to himself, and sometimes the letters ran into considerable length, unless Blackie butted in. His father, it seemed, even consulted him about his own affairs:

I am glad you approve of my taking on the San Miguel project. I think a great deal of your business judgment and it is great to have a son who has good business judgment even though he cannot make the team. In that respect it is better than making the team, because you can help me in my problems away off here just as I help you with your problems up there at school.

He enjoyed writing that one, but when he became the reader of it, that last sen-

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tence made him cry. And the worst of it was, at that point Blackie came in.

"What are you writing?"

"Just some stuff for the mag."

"You're always writing for the mag. Get your racket and come on."

"Oh, get out of here and quit interrupting my literary work." Junior had not dared to turn his telltale face towards his roommate.

The school year was closing, and Junior was packing to leave the next day. The last time he had gone to town he learned at the office that his father was returning soon. They did not know which steamer. They never did. The secret letters had all been kept carefully locked in his trunk, and now Junior was taking them out to put neatly folded trousers in the bottom. Blackie was playing tennis. None of the boys had learned the truth, though in se-

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cret Blackie felt pretty sure of it now, but was so loyal that he had a fight with Smithy for daring to say in public that Junior's letters were a damn fake.

Mr. Fielding came in. He did not notice the letters lying there on the table, and he seemed very friendly. The house-master knew how fine and sensitive this boy was and that the only way to handle him was by encouragement. "We are all much pleased with your classroom work, Junior; but as for the mag, you're a rotten speller, but a good writer, and I don't mind telling you a secret: You have been elected to be one of the editors next year."

"Oh, Mr. Fielding! Are you sure?" This had been his ambition for a year. That settled it for life. A great writer like W. H. Hudson, who loved both nature and art, but nature more.

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"Of course your appointment has to be confirmed by the faculty, but there'll be no trouble with a boy of your standing. All you have to do is straighten out that little matter with your father. Naturally, an editor has got to have a clean literary record."

This was not meant entirely as punishment for Junior. The master thought it would be salutary for Phil to know. It might wake him up.

"You mean, I can't make the mag unless I tell him what I did?"

"Do you want me to tell him?"

"If you do I'll run away and I'll never come back."

"Can't you get up your courage to do it, Junior? I know you didn't mean to do wrong. Your father will, too, when he understands."

Junior was shaking his head.

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"It isn't a matter of courage," he said, straightening up. "He'd think I was knocking him out for not writing to me."

"Well, if you won't talk to him about it I must. He'll be here in a few minutes."

"A few minutes! Here? Why didn't you tell me?"

"He landed yesterday. The papers ran an interview with him this morning. I telegraphed him to come at once." Mr. Fielding looked at his watch. "Why, his train must be coming in now. Excuse me. I said I'd meet him at the station."

A mental earthquake turned Junior's universe upside down. His father was coming at last! Why? His offense must have been pretty serious to bring his father. Why, of course! Mr. Fielding had sent for him. The most honorable gentleman in the world was going to find



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out in a few minutes that his own son and namesake was a liar, a plagiarist, and a forger. Junior could not face it. He rushed from the room and out by the back stairs. His father was coming, the thing he planned and longed for ever since he had been a member of the school, and he was running away from him.

He went out into the woods by the river, where he had spent so many happy hours with Blackie and the birds. He could never face Blackie again, nor the school, no, nor his father. Life was empty and horrible. "Why not end it all in the river?" He had read that phrase, but the impulse was genuine.

"The hell of it is," he heard himself saying, "I'm such a good swimmer."

But he could load his coat with stones and bind his feet with his trousers. He began picking out the stones.

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“Well, what is it?” said Phil to the housemaster, trying to hide his paternal eagerness. The boy was in trouble, the old man would get him out. Good! Needed at last. “Has my young hopeful been getting tight?”

“Oh, nothing as serious as that. He’s a finely organized, highly evolved youngster, and so he has a rather vivid imagination.”

“Speak up, Aleck! You haven’t caught him in a lie? That’s a good deal more serious than getting tight.”

“Well, it’s a likable lie.”

“It’s a lie all the same, and I’ll give him the devil.”

“Oh no, you won’t. The kid lied for you, old man; perjured himself like a gentleman. Now you go and get it out of him. It’ll do you both good.” They had arrived at the house.

“Where is the little cuss?” Phil was

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trying without success to seem calm and casual.

"He's no longer little. You won't know him. He's come into his heritage of good looks at last."

"For God's sake, shut up and tell me where to find him."

Fielding laughed. "Upstairs, second door on the left. I won't butt in on this business. It's up to you now." But Phil did not wait to hear all that.

Not finding his namesake and glancing about at the intimate possessions of his little-known son, Phil was surprised to see a sheaf of letters on the table, bearing his own engraved stamp at the top.

"That's odd," he thought. "Who's been writing to him on my paper?" He had forgotten the presentation box of stationery. His eye was caught by these words neatly typed, "My beloved son."

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At the bottom of the page he saw, "Your faithful friend and father." He picked the letter up and read it.

As I told you in my last, I am counting the days until we get together again and go up to Canada on another canoe trip, just you and I alone this time without any guide. You have become such a good camper now that we don't want any greasy Indian guides around. I am glad that you are a good camper. I don't care what you say, I'd rather go to the woods with you than Billy Norton or anybody because you and I are not like ordinary father and sons; we are congenial friends. Of course you are pretty young to be a friend of mine and you may be an ugly and unattractive kid, but you are mine all the same, and I'm just crazy about you. They say I neglect you, but you know better. All these letters prove it. Your faithful friend and father.

Junior's father picked up the rest of the letters and, with the strangest sensations a father ever had, read them all.

Perhaps it was telepathy. Junior suddenly remembered that he had left the

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letters exposed upon the table. His father would go upstairs after the talk with Mr. Fielding, to disown him. He would find those incriminating letters. Then when they found his body his father would know that his son was not only a liar and a forger but a coward and a quitter. In all his life his father had never been afraid of anything. If his father were in his place what would he do?

That saved him. He dumped out the stones and ran back to the room. He would face it.

Phil was aware that a tall slender youth with a quick elastic stride had entered the room and had stopped abruptly by the door, staring at him. There were reasons why he preferred not to raise his face at present, but this boy's figure was unrecognizably tall and strong, and Phil

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was in no mood to let a young stranger come in upon him now.

“What do you want?” he asked gruffly, still seated, still holding the letters.

There was no answer. Junior had never seen a father disown a son, but he guessed that was the way it was done. He saw the letters in his father’s hands. Certainly, this was being disowned.

The boy took a step forward. “Well, anyway,” he said, maintaining a defiant dignity in his disgrace, “no one else has seen those letters, so you won’t be compromised, father.” The boy was a great reader, and had often heard of compromising letters.

Phil sprang up from his chair, dropped the letters and gazed into the fine sensitive face, a beautiful face, it seemed to him now, quivering, but held bravely up to meet his sentence like a soldier.

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Junior could now see that his father's strong face was also quivering, but misunderstood the reason for his emotion. There was a silence while Phil gained control of his voice. Then he said, still gazing at the boy, "But how did you know I felt that way about you?"

"What way?"

"Those letters. I've read them. I wish to God I'd written them."

Junior, usually so quick, still could not get it right. "You mean, you're going to forgive me for lying about you?"

"Lying about me! Why, boy, you've told the truth about me. I didn't know how. Can you forgive me for that?"

Now Junior was getting it. His face was lighting up. "Why, father," he began, and faltered. "Why, father — why, father — you really like me?"

Junior felt strong hands gripping his

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shoulders and once more the vivid recollection of the street boys and the big man who comforted him. "You know what one of those letters says, Junior — I'm just crazy about you."

"Oh, father, why didn't you ever tell me?"

"Well, what's the use of having a great writer in the family anyway!"

They laughed and looked at each other and found that the strange thing that kept them apart was gone forever. In the future they might differ, quarrel even, but the veil between them was torn asunder at last.

The rest of the boys had finished dinner when Junior came down, leading in his tall bronzed father with the perfectly fitting clothes and the romantic scar on his handsome face.

"Say, fellows, wait a minute. I want



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you to know my father." He did it quite as if accustomed to it, but Mrs. Fielding down at the end of the table could see that father and son both were reeking with pride. "He's my son; I'm his father."

"So this is Blackie?" said Phil. "Did you give him that message in my last letter?" Even his father could lie when he wanted to.

"Sorry, I forgot."

Phil turned and gave his old classmate a shameless wink. "I can't really blame the kid. I write him such awfully long letters."

"Father just landed from South America yesterday," Junior was explaining to Smithy. "So he hurried right up here."

"You see, we're starting for the Canadian Rockies to-morrow," said Phil. "This fellow's got an impudent idea that

## NOT WANTED

he can out-cast the old man now, but I'll show him his place."

Mr. Fielding took the floor. "Junior ought to get some good material for the magazine up there," he said. "Boys, he's going to be one of the editors next year."









